OGC 74-1755

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30 September 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with E. Howard Hunt Re His Memoirs, "Undercover"

1. On 28 September 1974 Ray Rocca, Deputy Chief/CI Staff, and I met in the DCD Washington Field Office with E. Howard Hunt, his attorney William A. Snyder, Jr., and Snyder's associate Thomas W. Coons. As the meeting began, Hunt asked if it was being tape-recorded; I assured him that it was not. He said he did not care; but that, if it were to be recorded, he would like to know. We then embarked upon the review according to the plan under which we would demand the deletion of three items as classified and then proceed to the remaining 29 items, only if Hunt was cooperative on the first three. He and his lawyers appeared very cooperative, and accordingly, the meeting continued to cover all 32 items.

2. Changes were agreed to in the items set forth in paragraphs 12, 14, and 25 of the CI Staff memorandum of 19 September 1974. These appear at pages 73, 80-83, and 115 of the galley proof and concern the fabrication of the Shanghai post for a Mexican operation, the entry into the Guatemalan Embassy in Mexico City, and the joint CIA-Uruguayan telephone monitoring operation. The wording of the agreed changes is as shown on the attached copies of the pertinent pages of the galley proof. Essentially, these changes disguise the identity of the fabricated newspaper and remove a reference to journalists as agents; delete the word "Guatemalan" to make the entered embassy non-specific; and delete the reference to listening posts and telephone monitoring to make that paragraph refer in more general terms to our ability to cover targets without referring to the use of electronic surveillance.

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3. We then proceeded to the 29 items which we would like to see modified but which we could not consider classified. We made this clear to Hunt and went through them one by one, discussing our concern with each. Hunt contended that most of these items should not be considered sensitive since they had been publicized extensively; in some cases confirmed in testimony; and, in the case of other items, the principals involved were dead. However, he agreed to changes in the items referred to in paragraphs 1, 3, 17, and 32 of the CI Staff memorandum of 19 September. These involve the deletions of the names of Henry Pleasants and Frank Holcomb, both now retired under cover; a direct reference to joint operations with the British in Hong Kong against China; and the wording of his reference to CIA alias documentation used by the Watergate burglars. The language of this last item will be changed so that it no longer leaves the impression that the documentation was prepared by the Agency for this operation.

4. When we had finished, Hunt and his lawyers emphasized as they had mentioned earlier in the meeting that it might be very difficult to get the publisher to agree to changes in the unclassified items. Mr. Snyder offered to present all of the items to the publisher for change without distinguishing between the classified and unclassified items. He said he would do this without implying they were all classified. I felt it necessary to turn down his offer because of the risk of the publisher being unwilling to accept that many changes with the result that we would have to go back to him on the three classified items, thus presenting a situation similar to our retraction of previously demanded deletions in the Marchetti book. I think there would be some danger of the publisher using this in his advertising and through reviewers for publicity purposes.

5. As we were leaving, Hunt showed me what was described as a "comfort letter." This was a letter written by him to the publishers on 17 May 1974 at the publisher's request which said that in his opinion nothing in the manuscript violated any agreement between himself and the CIA, nor would subject him to prosecution under the espionage laws. As the meeting was ending, Hunt expressed his hope that no publicity would be given to it and that the Agency would not issue any kind of a press release. In view of the Director's decision that we shall issue a press release, I took pains to persuade Hunt that public acknowledgment of the fact that we had reviewed his

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manuscript would be in his interest as well as ours. He had referred more than once during the meeting to the need to avoid the appearance of "a bear hug"; in other words, collusion or cooperation between him and the Agency, leaving an inference that the book was designed to be a whitewash of CIA. In view of this, it was easy to convince Hunt that an Agency press release would be in his interest. I would note here, however, that both Mr. Rocca and I felt that Hunt and his lawyers were genuinely cooperative and that a press release which is too harsh or denigrates the book or Hunt's motives might be unfair and considered by him to be in bad faith. Hunt appears to retain admiration and respect for the Agency and seems convinced that nothing in his book will harm our operations or personnel.

JOHN D. MORRISON, JR.
Acting General Counsel

Attachments

cc: Acting DDO
SAB/DDO
DC/CI Staff
O/Security
Asst. to DCI
Mr. Walter Pforzheimer
C/CCS

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